

Serial No. 10/796,578
Response to Office Action

REMARKS

At the time the current Official Action was mailed, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 5-7 and 12-16, the Examiner objected to claim 2-4 and 8-10, and the Examiner allowed claims 11, 17 and 18. By the present Response, claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-12, and 14-18 have been amended, and claims 2, 6, 8, and 13 have been cancelled. Applicant believes these amendments place all pending claims in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 5, 6, and 12-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner rejected such claims as being incomplete for omitting essential structural cooperative relationships of elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the necessary structural connections.

Although Applicant appreciates the Examiner's comments and concerns, Applicant does not agree that the claims as originally presented are indefinite or that they omit any necessary structural relationships. Indeed, Applicant firmly believes that the claims as originally submitted inherently include the subject matter alleged by the Examiner to be omitted, and that such claims would be readily understood by one of ordinary skill in the art. Nevertheless, in order to facilitate prosecution of the present application, Applicant has amended independent claims 5, 12, and 16 in a manner consistent with the Examiner's suggestions. Applicant respectfully submits that these amendments do not narrow the scope of the originally presented claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections under Section 112.

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Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Conlon reference in view of the Wilbur reference and the Scheiner reference. The Examiner also rejected claims 7 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Baker reference in view of the Wilbur reference.

Although Applicant does not agree with the Examiner's rejections under Section 103, Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter as discussed in further detail below. Consequently, Applicant has chosen to place the application in condition for allowance and to address the Examiner's rejections under Section 103 in a subsequently filed continuing application.

Indications of Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner indicated that claims 11, 17 and 18 are allowable as originally filed. Applicant has amended these claims to replace the term "said" with the term "the." Applicant submits that these amendments do not alter the scope of the originally filed claims, and that claims 11, 17, and 18 are presently in condition for allowance.

The Examiner indicated that claims 2-4 and 8-10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the subject matter set forth in dependent claim 2, and Applicant has amended dependent claims 3 and 4 to ensure proper dependencies. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 3 and 4 are presently in condition for allowance. Similarly, applicant has amended independent claim 7 to include the subject matter of claim 8, and applicant has amended dependent claims 9 and 10 to

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ensure proper dependencies. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 7, 9, and 10 are also presently in condition for allowance.

The Examiner further indicated that claims 6 and 13-15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and to overcome the rejections under Section 112. Accordingly, Applicant has amended independent claim 5 to include the subject matter of claim 6, and Applicant respectfully submits that claim 5 is currently in condition for allowance. Similarly, Applicant has amended independent claim 12 to include the subject matter of claim 13, and dependent claims 14 and 15 have been amended for aesthetic reasons. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 12, 14 and 15 are currently in condition for allowance.

Finally, the Examiner indicated that claim 16 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the Section 112 rejection. As mentioned previously, claim 16 has been amended to overcome the Section 112 rejection, and Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments do not alter scope of the originally-filed claim. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 16 is presently in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that all outstanding rejections have been addressed and that claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-12, and 14-18 are presently in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner pass the present application to issuance.

If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

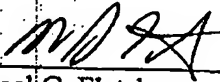
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General Authorization for Extensions of Time

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, Applicant hereby provides a general authorization to treat this and any future reply requiring an extension of time as incorporating a request therefor. Furthermore, Applicant authorizes the Commissioner to charge the appropriate fee of \$1020.00 for the three-month extension of time, and any additional fees which may be required, to the credit card listed on the attached PTO-2038. However, if the PTO-2038 is missing, if the amount listed thereon is insufficient, or if the amount is unable to be charged to the credit card for any other reason, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 06-1315; Order No. TYHC:0052/FLE.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: October 10, 2005



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